

ISSUED BY THE CHARITY ORGANIZATION SOCIETY
OF CHICAGO.

HOW PAUPERS ARE MADE.

AN ADDRESS ON THE PREVENTION OF PAUPERISM.

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HOW PAUPERS ARE MADE.

The rapid growth of Pauperism, of late years, in every one of the great cities of our land is too apparent to be overlooked and too alarming to be allowed any longer to exist unheeded by the philanthropic and charitable among our people.

At the present day this important subject is receiving the serious and earnest consideration of thoughtful men in every section of the country, and the question is being asked on every hand "Is there not some practical, well-devised scheme for preventing the growth of this evil"—an evil be it remembered which is increasing as steadily as our national prosperity is advancing and which is keeping even pace with the yearly increasing wealth of the country?

Unfortunately the business men in our large cities know but little of the utter ruin—personal, social, and moral—which always marks the track of Pauperism. They see the pauper, perhaps, for a few seconds as he stands at the door of their offices or their homes to beg, and then vanishes from their sight; or, it may be, that now and again they catch a momentary glimpse of this terrible evil when some reporter for the public press gives a wood picture of scenes which he has witnessed in some of the hot-beds of Pauperism. But if we would see Pauperism as it is; how it destroys all that is noble in human nature; how it casts its deadly blight over all family ties; how it desecrates the home; how it pillages society and rebels against all law and social order, we must witness it for ourselves as it exists in its hiding-places in this and other great centres of population.

It may seem to be a sweeping statement, but we make it unhesitatingly, that so-called charity is largely responsible for this terrible state of things; for Charity can be the greatest blessing or the greatest curse of the human race.

Charity can take the helpless orphan, educate him, and start him in life on an equal footing with his more favored fellows. It can take the aged, whom misfortune has overtaken late in the struggle for wealth, and render their declining years peaceful and happy. It can take those who are out of employment, but ready and willing to work, and can raise them to a position of permanent self-support. It can take the temporary sick, who, if well, would be wholly or partially self-supporting, and by proper care can hasten their restoration to health. It can take the children of working women and give them food and shelter, and the first step in their secular education as citizens, while the mothers are at work; and in many a way it can help to better and elevate the condition of the helpless and honest poor. Yes, Charity can do all this, and much more that is beneficent, and elevating, and ennobling! But charity is not always beneficent. It is possible to do an immense amount of harm by charity, so-called. It is possible to reduce a fellow-being to the condition of a willing pauper by fostering habits of indolence and dependence and improvidence. It is possible to rob a human being of his manhood—of all that is noble in his nature, and to leave him a mere wreck, to drift hither and thither on the ocean of life, in utter recklessness and despondency, till he ends his days in the workhouse, the reformatory or the prison.

Now, too distinct a line cannot be drawn between the poor man and the pauper. We cannot think that there is any room in this busy world of ours for those social drones who prey upon the industry of others, and prefer to beg rather than to work. The very existence of the pauper is a disgrace to our civilization. For the "poor" there is ample room in the great heart of humanity, but the very word "pauper" is a blot upon our language. Yes, and not only have we given a name to this creature of our own making, this mixture of things pitiful and hateful, we have even put the idea into brick and stone, and in our "county alms-houses" we have pauperism vaunting itself in official garb and coming home to us, as curses always do, to be fed, and clothed, and supported at the expense of the industrious.*

+ We say that the pauper is the creature of our own making; how then are paupers made?

+ Take a simple illustration of the steps by which an honest human being is reduced to the condition of a pauper. Take the case of a poor woman, a widow; a case that is constantly coming to

the notice of the benevolent. What has usually been our action in such a case? Instead of once for all considering how much she could do for her own and her children's support, and uniting our forces to relieve her of that part of the burden which she could not possibly meet, we have allowed her to come to our houses to beg, and we have given her, when her story or tears moved us, a few dollars. We eased our own feelings by doing this, but what besides did we accomplish? Did we fortify her for the battle of life? Did we cultivate in her the habit of frugality, or deliberate arrangement as to the best expenditure of her scanty means? No! We did our best to teach her how easy it was, if she got into debt, to go around from house to house and solicit a few dollars from each, and having met the difficulty for the moment to begin involving herself in another. Now look at her a few years later. The sincere grief of the widowed mother degraded into a means of begging! The ready tears coming at call! The sacred grief paraded for every one to see, in hopes that some one may alleviate it with a half dollar! The sense of a right to be helped has been fostered; the sense of her own duty has been weakened. The easily-begged money has been easily spent, and grief has become her stock in trade. Perhaps she has discovered, too, that professions of piety are rewarded with cash. We are shocked at her hypocrisy; we say we were only too glad to help her when she was an honest woman, and while her grief was strong and sincere, but now it is different. And what has made her different? What but our own unwise, uncharitable charity? The world is beginning to see that there is such a thing as making a pauper—a confirmed and willing beggar—of our fellows, that there is such a thing as undermining their manhood, robbing them of their self-esteem, destroying their independence of character and leaving them without a will to work or ambition to seek it. In unwise almsgiving there is infinitely more at stake than wasting one's own money; it is disastrous to the poor, it is often ruin to the poor.

But the curse does not end here. By an eternal law, the law of Environment, the children of paupers themselves become paupers; and by a second eternal law, the law of Heredity, paupers breed paupers, till at length we meet with such terrible cases as that of the Wood family in Indianapolis, or the Jukes family in the State of New York, where whole families for generations back have been breeding pauperism and vice till they have become an insufferable tax upon the community and a curse to the country.

Now what means do we adopt to counteract this terrible state of things? I reply, absolutely none. We give ourselves up to a masterly inactivity. We let pauperism severely alone.

Ask any of the clergy of the city what course they adopt with regard to paupers; ask any of our benevolent societies; ask our business men. One and all will tell you, "We give nothing to the pauper if we know it."

Now I have no fault to find with this. It most certainly is *not* the duty of any almoner of charity funds, whether official or private, to expend on the pauper what is intrusted to him for the benefit of the poor. I would simply call your attention to the fact that this part of charity work, the reclaiming of the pauper, does not come under the cognizance of any existing society.

But to return. It is the distinguishing mark of the pauper to refuse to work—to prefer to beg. What then is he to do when the door of every relief agency is closed against him, the door of every church, the door of every office and home? Does this necessitate his earning his bread by the sweat of his brow? Perhaps not, as theologians understand that text. No, work apart, his sole resource is to live by imposture and fraud, and by means of a cleverly worked up tale, well told, and accompanied by a few simple dramatic effects to secure a substantial living and no questions asked. Day by day he goes from office to office, house to house, his route for the month being mapped out as skilfully as the experienced manager of a theatrical troupe plans a provincial tour. And why should he work when begging pays so much better?

But even at this point he has not reached the lowest depths of deception. To show you the sequel to false charity, I must take you to England, to a country where pauperism has grown hoary with age, where the skill of the impostor has had to keep pace with the increased scrutiny of the benevolent, where pauperism has become an art.

Not long ago there appeared in the advertising columns of some of the London journals a notice, stating that: "the art of begging is exhaustively taught in six lessons by Professor Lazarus Rooney, who begs to inform the public that he has founded a college for theoretical and practical instruction in mendicancy." Among other practical appliances for the profession the professor announces that he keeps on hand artificial wounds and sores, assorted braces of twins, trained dogs for blind men, crutches for cripples and sur-

gical bandages for wounded impostors. Information is afforded respecting the most lucrative streets and neighborhoods.

One step lower and the end is reached. I have in my possession a notice, issued by the Charity Organization Society of London, warning citizens not to give to the following fraudulent societies: "The Christian Men's Union Benevolent Association," "The Disabled Firemans' Relief and Pension Association," "The Free Dormitory Association." These and many similar devices for picking the pockets of the charitable are the direct outcome of sentimental, unwise alms-giving.

The poor man, robbed of his will to labor by unwise charity, becomes in course of time a beggar; from beggar he becomes a pauper; the pauper left to himself becomes by easy steps an impostor; from impostor a criminal, and often ends his days, as he has lived, at the expense of the public.

The question arises then, is it possible to prevent the pauperization of the poor, for if this can be done you strike at once at the source of all this degradation and crime. I answer that it is possible; and I do not hesitate to say, after many years of experience, that Charity Organization is the only means, so far devised, for effecting this great end.

Now what is Charity Organization? If I were asked for a short definition, I should say it is the nineteenth century's solution of the great problem of pauperism. But let me explain what I mean. Dr. Chalmers, early in the present century, while working heroically against the pauperism of his parish in Glasgow struck out the two great principles: 1st, that pauperism cannot be dealt with in the mass, but must be attacked individually, and this led to the idea of dividing a city into districts; and 2d, he insisted that material relief and spiritual instruction should never be attempted by the same person unless we wish to raise up an army of hypocrites. Then came Frederick Ozanam, the founder of the celebrated St. Vincent de Paul society, of Paris, now of the world, with the great principle of unsectarianism in charity, and the duty of helping the poor because they are men, and not because they belong to this or that church; and (2), he struck out the idea of helping the poor by the "alms of good advice" rather than by money; and (3), being provident for the poor as they are seldom provident for themselves. Then came the Elberfeld system inaugurated by Herr von der Heydt, and showing what might be accomplished by systematic, constant and kindly

oversight of a friend at the homes of the poor, taking, when necessary, relief to the home and doing away with the degrading necessity of obliging the poor either to ask or to seek charity. Then came the 'self-sacrificing work of Edward Denison in London, a young Oxford graduate, son of a bishop of the Church of England, who took up his residence among the very poorest classes so as to learn by actual experience what could be done to check the pauperism of the great metropolis, and who came to the conclusion that the greater part of all charity was doing positive harm, and was a premium on idleness, vice and crime. And finally, as the crystallization of all the thought and experience of various parts of Europe, came the Charity Organization Society of London, which has accomplished perfect marvels in that city of four millions of people.

Now if charity organization is the solution of the great problem of pauperism, it must answer, and answer in a plain, practical way the three questions which lie at the root of the whole matter. It must answer the question: *How are we to prevent the poor from being under the necessity of asking or receiving alms?* Now by the term "poor" I mean that large class who under ordinary circumstances are self-supporting, but perhaps barely so—those who while health and strength last can make both ends meet and nothing more.

Now, I ask you is it true charity, is it true love, to take no thought for our neighbor so long as, by hard toil and freedom from sickness, he can keep clear of the County Agent's office, or can avoid the scrutiny of the relief agency, or does not darken the doors of your offices or homes, asking for alms? Yet where is the benevolent society which assumes the duty of attending to the interests of this large class throughout the city, watching over them, not with the keen eye of the money maker, but with the loving interest of a friend?

It is here that the Charity Organization Society steps in with a strong, loving hand, and does what no relief society has ever attempted in the past. It goes in the person of its District Agent to this class in every district, not in a patronizing way—which is as offensive to the poor as it is to the rich—but as fellow-men, and presents provident schemes based on sound business principles, and backed by the strong ones of the city—schemes which are brought down to the level of their small incomes, and they are appealed to by the same arguments of forethought and provision for the 'morrow which weigh with the wealthy or well-to-do when they insure their

lives or their property. Two illustrations will suffice. The two chief causes which compel the poor to ask for alms, and thus to take the first step in possible pauperization, are sickness and want of work. How does the society anticipate these emergencies? In every district there will be started, unless already in existence, a branch of the Provident Dispensary, where, by the payment of ten cents per month for the man, ten cents for the wife, and five cents for the child, say a cent for each working day of the month, the poor man and his family will be entitled when sick to the services of a physician, and to medicines either at the Dispensary or at the house, as the case may require. This is no mere theorizing. During the past fifteen years, so convinced have the medical profession of London become that free medicines pauperize just as much as free soup or free rent, that the old free dispensaries have been changed, with few exceptions, into provident dispensaries, and new provident ones started in many of the large cities of England.

This system is no injustice to the doctors, for the reason that the class of persons who are eligible as members never pay a doctor as the matter stands to-day, while under the provident system the doctors receive the majority of the money arising from membership dues.

It is not pauperizing to the poor, because they pay for what they receive, and their self-respect is not destroyed.

Or, take a second example: In every district the society will establish a branch of the Penny, or Provident Bank, which will be taken to the very homes of the poor. They will not be asked to call at some imposing building during working hours, where they would be jostled by well-dressed depositors, and perhaps raise a smile by the smallness of their deposit. The agent, or other person duly authorized will attend at some convenient place in their own quarter after working hours, will receive their small savings, and no one will be ashamed of the smallness of his deposit when all deposits are of a like nature. And here again I say this is no untried theory. Says Mr. Bartley, in one of his series of Provident Knowledge Papers:

"The amount of money which may be collected in this way is almost incredible. In the Yorkshire Penny Banks, which are so admirably managed, no less than £24,867 2s. 2d. was due to the depositors on the 31st of December, 1870, in the Leeds Central Branch alone. The amount due to the depositors at the 248

branches was—at the same date—no less than £229,609 2s. A great part of this—it is not too much to say—would have been heedlessly spent, or what is worse, probably wasted in drink, had it not thus been secured through the agency of the Penny Banks.”

I might instance other provident schemes, but I have said sufficient to illustrate what is the Society’s plan to prevent the poor from being under the necessity of asking or receiving alms.

But there is another question which the Society must answer practically if it is the solution of the problem of Pauperism, and the question is this:

How are we to prevent the pauperization of those who are compelled to seek relief?

It is beyond dispute that begging is repugnant and wholly repugnant to man’s nature, as God has made him. If you doubt this statement you have only to watch the poor man the first time that he is compelled to ask for assistance. The burning shame which he feels is manifest in every look, every gesture, every word. The very disclaimer which he puts forward, viz.: that he has never begged before—that the want of employment, or the fact of sickness, alone, could force him thus to meet the wants of a starving family, shows how alien begging is to true manhood; how degrading—yes, it verily seems as though the poor, at such times, had a strong though silent feeling that they are taking the first step in a downward path.

Now, what the Charity Organization Society is striving to effect, is the fostering of this honest feeling, where it exists, in the bosoms of the poor, or if it has already been deadened by almsgiving, to guard the poor against further pauperization, and to rekindle their self-respect.

But how is this to be accomplished?

We contend that it is pauperizing to give charity even to the honest poor, unless we throw around them the safeguard of thorough investigation and personal interest in their welfare. We do not deny for a single moment that the Relief agencies of our large cities do, as a matter of fact, investigate to the best of their ability. But what the Society maintains is this: that it is impossible to investigate thoroughly, no matter what the age or experience of a benevolent agency may be, unless there is the registration of all relief that is being given in a city, whether from the public purse, from benevolent societies, or from charitable individuals. Registration is a pre-re-

quisite to investigation. Why is it that in every State of the Union, all deeds, all mortgages, all transfers of real estate, are required by law to be recorded or registered? If there were no registration, I ask you, could the lawyer make a search, *i.e.*, investigate a title with any degree of certainty? Why is it that registration is becoming the rule in all business operations? Is it not for the purpose of detecting fraud and protecting rightful claims, and is it not acknowledged to be a benefit to the honest and a drawback only to those who have fraudulent intentions?

And so it is in the matter of charity. Registration, *i.e.*, reporting to some Central Office the name and address of all who are assisted by charity, is the sole means of detecting fraud on the one hand, and on the other, of preventing the pauperization of the needy poor. The system adapted by the Charity Organization Society is such that if the benevolent of the city would but fully co-operate imposition would be well-nigh impossible. Register your charities and the impostor might apply to a score of charitable persons, to a dozen relief societies, to a half a dozen of the clergy, but each time, if the case were referred to the Society for investigation, the same report would be returned and the impostor would be compelled either to do his fair share of work or to leave the city of Chicago.

In the case of the poor who need assistance, registration is no less important. How is it possible to know for certain whether the gift of money or food or clothing will do harm, will pauperize, unless we know how much the applicant is already receiving from other sources?

And here it must be remembered that the poor can be pauperized either by too much charity or by too little charity.

Suppose that a family is in real distress. There is not a right-minded man in the community but would do his utmost to assist. But suppose that the same tale of distress is told to a dozen different citizens, and each, imagining that he is fully relieving a fellow creature's want, gives of his abundance, I ask you, would he be so ready to give if he knew for certain that eleven others were doing the same thing?

Believe me, the majority of the poor, even the honest poor, as we call them, will get all they can; they do not see that it is wrong; they do not see that they are doing themselves an injury. It is for us to guard them and prevent them from doing themselves an in-

justice. Now I ask you to note the true kindness of Registration. It enables the charitable to give without fear of pauperizing the recipient for it shows how much is really needed and when the emergency is once met prevents the possibility of the applicant drawing any further relief. Nor is this all.

It sees that the needy have adequate help so as to preclude the degrading necessity of begging, and this is all important. If the poor cannot get sufficient from one source they will seek it elsewhere, they will beg, and what can be more pauperizing than this? Besides the Society will notify citizens who may be assisting a case, the very moment the emergency no longer exists, so that relief can be cut off at once. Otherwise the poor might be taught to lean on alms-giving and be robbed of their will to work.

I know that the objection will be made that registration involves a breach of that secrecy which ought to characterize our alms-giving. I would be the last to advocate a system which did any injustice to the poor or any violence to the holy instincts of the benevolent. But the registration of which I am speaking is solely in the interest of the poor. The information confided to the Society is held as a sacred trust. Its books are jealously guarded. No one outside of the office is allowed access to these depositories of information and even reports are sent only to those who have a legitimate interest in cases.

Those who talk of thorough "investigation," but ignore registration know but little of the needs of the present day. It has well been asked "To what purpose is it that a visitor expend half a day in investigating any given case that charity may not be misapplied if the applicant can depend on half a dozen other sources of supply?" No independent investigation can prevent pauperization. So long as but one loophole is left unguarded pauperization is possible. It is by registration, and registration alone that the public can be protected from fraud and the poor be protected from harm by superfluous alms-giving.

The third and last question which Charity Organization must answer if it be the solution of the problem of Pauperism is this: *How are we to reclaim the pauperized poor?*

This is indeed a difficult question to answer. The confirmed pauper—the creature of persistent, immoral almsgiving—is almost as difficult to reclaim as the confirmed drunkard. I never see one of these poor wrecks of humanity but I think of Archbishop

Whatley's remark: "I thank God that I shall never have to repent on my death-bed of ever having given a penny to a street beggar." They take your charity (so called), drink your health at the nearest saloon, and laugh at your credulity. It would be but poetic justice to send all such to the county almshouse to be supported by the tax payers, who have made them what they are.

But let us look the question full in the face. There are the *shiftless*, who are too idle to work; the *improvident*, who squander their means; the *dissolute*, who drink or gamble away their means and unfit themselves for steady work; the *confirmed pauper*, who makes a profession of begging; and the *tramp* or *vagrant*, who leads a worthless life and is but too often a thief. What is to be done with these cases? Are we to leave them to starve? Are we to allow them to live upon alms, and rob the honest poor? Or, again, are we to make them a charge upon the industrial classes, by taxing our citizens for their support?

I venture to think that none of these courses would for a moment approve itself to any thoughtful man. No, but one course is open, viz.: to give relief on the sole condition that each one makes a full return in work for whatever he may receive, or refusing this, bear the just penalty of his refusal.

But there is a large class of the *partially* pauperized, who can and should be reclaimed. How is this to be done? Let me give you an illustration, as it will bring out in a clear light the principles which underlie the Society's plan.

A widow with four children applied to the Buffalo Society for aid. It was found, on investigation, that the children were being supported at a private orphan asylum, at an expense to the city of \$400 per annum. The woman herself was in receipt of poor-law relief amounting to \$100 per annum. It was further found that she was in receipt of charity from a variety of sources, so that she was living in absolute idleness, supported by the gifts of the benevolent. The Chairman of the Committee of the District in which she lived endeavored to arouse her ambition by appealing to her motherly instincts, pointing out the disgrace that it would be to the children in after days to be known as the children of a well-known pauper. But it was all in vain. She boldly confessed that she had never been so comfortable as she had since the "kind ladies" had taken charge of her. As every attempt at persuasion failed, the Society, as a last resort, held a consultation with the Poor

Master, and the weekly dole of official relief was immediately cut off. It was this which brought her to her senses. She asked what the Society proposed to do to compensate her for the loss of the weekly official order. When told that she would be provided with work to an equal amount, she at first refused to listen to the offer, but finally accepted in a surly, half-angry mood. Four months elapsed. At the end of this time she came to the office, and of her own accord asked if the Committee could procure her more work, as she didn't care to live upon charity any longer. Additional work was procured, and at her own request the "kind ladies" were notified that she no longer needed their assistance. Nearly a year elapsed, when she again came to the District office for a private interview with the Chairman. She wanted her children, as she had ample work and could support them. The lady visitor who had been appointed to exercise a kindly oversight of the case was asked to see that the home was made bright and pleasant. The children were taken from the asylum; the family was once again brought together; the city was saved \$500 per annum; and the woman herself was reclaimed, and is to-day as honest and hard working a woman as lives in the city of Buffalo.

I ask you to note carefully the steps by which this result was accomplished :

1st. Registration disclosed the fact, not only that the woman was being pauperized, but also the extent to which this was the case.

2d. The most demoralizing part of the charity she was receiving, the official dole, was cut off, and employment was found in its place.

3d. A visitor was appointed, not to give alms, but the alms of good advice, so as to strengthen the woman's resolves; to help her to make the home bright and cheerful, and to show her how to get the maximum of health and comfort from her small means.

4th. As additional employment was procured, private relief was cut off, and the woman was thrown once again upon her own resources.

5th. As her self-respect and independence of character returned, the motherly instinct revived, and the receipt of relief in any shape became as distasteful as before it had been welcome.

I think it must be apparent from the brief sketch just given of the aims of charity organization, that it is the friend of every char-

itable agency in the city, and the rival of none. It interferes in no way with the operations of any existing charity. It seeks to cut off the waste but advocates the largest hearted benevolence. It denounces the pauperization of the poor under the guise of charity, but it tries to strengthen the hands of every society, every individual who strives to give with discrimination. It gives no alms, nor does it ask money for this purpose. It leaves the question of religious instruction to those who make this their especial duty. It allows no proselytism in any department of its work. It is simply humanitarian in its aims. It seeks by organizing all the charitable forces of the city to promote the social and moral elevation of the poor and the pauper.

It is not too much to say that the future well-being of this community—the future prosperity of the nation—depends on this: whether we boldly face and resolutely fight by rational methods the ever growing pauperism of the country or sit down in indolence till those whom we have pauperized turn upon us as a curse for our neglect of a great and imperative duty.



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